

PARASICYOS MACULATUS, A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES OF CUCURBITACEAE

FROM GUATEMALA

Jennie V. A. Dieterle
University of Michigan

Among specimens assembled for an enumeration of the Cucurbitaceae of Guatemala are several collections of a distinctive but apparently undescribed plant which does not fit readily into any of the genera so far recognized in the family. Its characters of united stamen filaments and solitary pendulous seeds ally it with genera in the tribe Sicyoideae in Cogniaux's (1916) arrangement, or the tribe Sicyoëae in Jeffrey's (1961, 1964), where, because of its clustered fruits and lack of nectariferous foveolae on the receptacle tube, it seems most closely related to Microsechium and Sicyos. However, it differs from Microsechium in having 5-petalled (not 4-petalled) staminate flowers, completely (not partially) connate filaments and spherically grouped (not radiately free) anthers. Its moderately large, rather fleshy fruits are markedly different from the dry, thin-walled, small fruits of Sicyos. Because of the difficulty in assigning the new plant an appropriate place in the family, I am proposing the following new genus:

PARASICYOS Dieterle, gen. nov.

Herba scandens monoecia; floribus staminatis in paniculas dispositis, corollis usque ad basim 5-partitis, petalis 5, sepalis 5, receptaculi foveolis nectariferis absentibus; staminum filamentis in columnam connatis, antheris ad apicem columnae sessilibus, sublibris; fructibus carnosus, monospermis, indehiscentibus ad apicem pedunculi aggregatis; seminibus solitariis ex apicibus loculorum fructuum pendentibus.

PARASICYOS MACULATUS Dieterle, sp. nov.

Herba monoecia scandens glabra; caules graciles, parce ramosi, sulcati; folia simplicia, membranacea, ambitu suborbicularia vel ovoidea ca 8-15 cm. longa, supra viridia et scabridula, subtus pallidiora et laevia, lobis 3(-5) late triangularibus, lobis lateralibus plerumque subauriculatis, sinu basilare rectangulari vel elliptice; petioli graciles, ca 3-4 cm. longi; cirrhi inaequaliter 3-partiti; flores staminati parvi, flavo-vires, in paniculas 10-20 cm. longas digesti, panicularum ramificatione in pedunculo alta; pedicelli 5-9 mm. longi, graciles, persistentes, post anthesin paulo incrementis; calycis tubus campanulatus; dentes subulati; corolla ca 5-8 mm. diametro, intus minutissime papillosa, extus glabra, segmentis ovato-triangularibus, integris; columna staminea gracilis, glabra, ca 1.5 mm. longa; antherarum loculi sigmoideo-flexuosi; flores pistillati ignoti; fructus ovoidei, in sicco ca 3-4.5 cm. longi, carnosus, indehiscentes, inermia, primum viridia pallidomaculati, demum rubelli viridimaculati, in pedunculo commune 2-aliquot subcapitati; semina solitaria, compressa, ambitu elliptica, 1.5-2 cm. longa.

Herbaceous vines, monoecious, glabrous; stems slender, sulcate, sparingly branched; tendrils usually 3-fid, proximally and unequally branched, the peduncle about as long to twice as long as the neighboring petiole. Leaves petiolate, membranaceous, suborbicular to ovate in outline, 8-15 cm. long, usually 3-lobed, the lobes triangular, the lateral lobes smaller and subauriculate, the basal sinus deeply rectangular to ovate, the upper surface deep green and scabridulous, the lower surface lighter green and smooth; margins denticulate to entire. Staminate flowers: panicles 10-20 cm. long, the branches few and borne on the upper third or less; pedicels slender, 5-9 mm. in length, long persistent after anthesis; perianth 5-merous, pale yellowish green; receptacle tube campanulate, not pitted with nectariferous foveolae; petals triangular to ovate-triangular, separate to the base, entire, more or less patent, the corolla up to about 8 mm. across, minutely papillose inside; sepals dentiform; stamens united, the filaments connate into a slender column, the anthers sessile at its apex but more or less free along their upper length; thecae sigmoid-flexuous. Pistillate flowers not seen. Fruits 1-seeded, unarmed, fleshy, ca 3-4.5 cm. in length when dry, indehiscent, green with light green spots, later brick-red with green spots, clustered 2 to several on a common peduncle about 3.5-5 cm. long. Seeds solitary, pendant from the apex of the fruit locule, ca 1.5-2 cm. long, elliptic in outline, compressed.

Type: Williams, Molina, Williams & de Molina 40205, Guatemala, Alta Verapaz, approx. 15°32' N, 90°15' W, alt. 1,200 m., cut-over and second growth forest, hills north of San Pedro Carchá, 28 January 1969 (holotype F; isotype MICH).

Bibliography

- Cogniaux, A. 1916. In Engler, Pflanzenr. IV, 275, I: 1.
- Jeffrey, C. 1961. Notes on Cucurbitaceae, including a proposed new classification of the family. Kew Bull. 15: 341.
- _____ 1964. A note on pollen morphology in Cucurbitaceae. Kew Bull. 17: 475.